

Catholic Thought and the Nation

PROFESSOR LOUIS J. A. MERCIER, M.A., LITT.D.

An address delivered at the Silver Anniversary of America at the Hotel Commodore, New York City, April 12, 1934.

IT is becoming almost trite to say that we are now living in a changing world, nay that we are witnessing the collapse of Western civilization.

To meet, as we do tonight, to pay tribute to a great Catholic magazine which, for twenty-five years, has served the Church and the nation, cannot but make us even more conscious of the crisis the world is facing.

When that magazine was founded Europe was still standing in all the pride of its nineteenth-century materialistic progress, but was shortly to be suddenly plunged into the most ghastly catastrophe of history. We too were led to overreach ourselves in our new pride of power only to awaken in turn humbled sharers of the world's bewilderment.

In truth, our world has not only changed, it has crashed down upon us. No one can be asked to speak in public in these days and not sense that he is expected to have this picture in mind, especially when the subject assigned has to do with Catholic thought and the nation.

I most painfully realize that there are any number of men and women here tonight, besides the distinguished speakers who have addressed you or are to address you, who are more qualified than I to take part in this program. I cannot express how dismayed I was by the honor of the invitation of your committee, or how much I hesitated to accept it, or with what misgivings I sat down to write this address. I sincerely believe that I should have begged to be excused if I had not come to face that ordeal in the peace of the afternoon of Easter day.

And then, it suddenly occurred to me that the essence of that Catholic thought about which I was asked to speak was the victory of the Resurrection.

Change? Yes, there is change and there will always be change. It is evidently the law of space and time, the law

of the created world, but what matters it whether there be change, provided we thoroughly realize that above the inevitable changes in and about us, there broods the eternal righteousness of God's mind and will. Since the first Easter day, nay since the eternal anticipation of Easter day, there could be for men and nations no permanent defeat save to forget the perfect prayer: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Now through these twenty-five years, the editors of *America* wrote with that prayer upon their lips. They wrote in the name of the abiding, because they wrote in the light of the corporate wisdom, natural and supernatural, of the Catholic Church.

They do not claim, we know, to have been infallible in their use of that light; and yet I dare to say that if an impartial observer were to go through the complete files of their magazine, he would have to conclude that, through these twenty-five years of criticism and counsel, the Catholic review *America* spoke for the best interests of this nation and of other nations.

And I beg leave to add that, if the same impartial observer were to go through the files of our other Catholic publications, he would have to testify to the fairness, and the evident wisdom, to the loyalty to the State, and the devotion to the welfare of our people which gleams from the pages of our entire Catholic press.

Furthermore, I should like to say that I do not feel that we are meeting here as partisans. We believe in the divine mission of the Catholic Church, but we also believe that many are members of the soul of that Church who are not among its communicants. As Catholics, we do not separate ourselves from our fellow-citizens of other creeds. The visible Church is the instrument of God for the eternal salvation of men, for the more abundant dispensation of His grace, for the dissemination of His truth, but we do not presume to take from Him the right to recognize as His children all those who are striving to attune their will to His own and to respond to the grace which He gives unto all. We are appealing to those who are not of our confession only on the basis of an objective truth which must satisfy their reason, counseling them only to beware of their possible prejudices.

And yet we must none the less take our stand. One thing we know. If there is conflict in the world, if there is disruption in the nation, and suffering, it must be through the fault of man, it must be due to the violation of God's law. The law exists outside of us. It is for us to discover it or to hearken to its revelation if it has been revealed. We cannot hope to dive head first against stone walls and not have headaches. We cannot hope to sit in one-legged chairs and maintain our balance. And, as in the physical order, so in the intellectual and in the spiritual, certain consequences follow certain actions.

No one, perhaps, has better expressed this otherworldliness of law than our late President Calvin Coolidge. "Men do not make laws," he wrote, "they do but discover them. Laws must be justified by something more than the will of the majority. They must rest on the eternal foundation of righteousness." We could ask for no better statement of Catholic doctrine. Man cannot with impunity follow his whims or his lust for power or for enjoyment. He must come to know and to practise the laws of eternal justice.

As Catholics, we must take a stand, but, as in this instance, as Catholics we do not have to, and we do not take a stand in favor of any doctrine which is not in accord with the dictates of common sense and of experience.

As Catholics, we say that the laws of man must be in accordance with the laws of God, if man would not suffer the consequences. We add that we must further note carefully that even when man knows what is right, he does not necessarily or easily act righteously. We say that therefore it behooves man to be humble. But, if there is so evidently in man's nature a tendency to disorder and to excess, if he, none the less, must follow the law to reach happiness and peace, in his individual, in his national, and in his international life; then, it is logical to believe that God must be ready, in answer to his prayer, to enlighten his mind and to strengthen his will.

Faith in the power of man to achieve a measure of order and of happiness with the help of God, is undoubtedly one of the most fundamental tenets of Catholic doctrine. But it is no less undoubtedly the faith of the majority of our fellow-citizens. It is in fact part of the inauguration oath of our Presidents.

It is true that this doctrine implies the recognition of a

higher moral power than the State. But again it is of the very essence of Americanism to recognize that higher power. "In the forum of conscience," wrote Chief Justice Hughes, "duty to a higher moral power than the State has always been maintained. The reservation of that supreme obligation, as a matter of principle, would undoubtedly be made by many of our conscientious citizens. The essence of religion is belief in a relation to God involving duties superior to those arising from any human relation."

So must we speak as Americans. But so must we speak also as Catholics. It may not be amiss tonight to meditate for a moment on this wondrous conjunction of American and Catholic thought.

For we may fearlessly say more. The American political doctrine is not only in conformity with Catholic thought. It derives directly from Catholicism. The principle of the sovereignty of the people, under God, upon which the government of this nation is founded goes back to St. Thomas Aquinas, and, what is more, its transmission is due in large measure to the members of that very Order to which we are paying tribute tonight. If the Jesuits of the seventeenth century have been so maligned it is largely because they steadfastly opposed in all countries the rise of Absolutism. In 1594 a Jesuit, who, curiously, bore the same name as the present editor-in-chief of *America*, published what has been called "the first statement of the rights of the common people in the English language." In 1680, Sir Robert Filmer, defending the Divine rights of kings admits that the theory of democracy comes from the Schoolmen, and begins with a long quotation from Bellarmine in order to refute Bellarmine's assertion of the sovereignty of the people. In 1698, Algernon Sydney in his *Discourse on Government* writes to refute Filmer and acknowledges his indebtedness to Bellarmine. Locke also wrote to refute Filmer and expands his summary of Bellarmine. Now Mason Jefferson and his contemporaries knew Sydney, Filmer, and Locke. It is therefore not strange that, as has been pointed out in a Catholic University thesis by Dr. Rager, similarities of expression can be found in the Virginia Declaration of Rights, in the Declaration of Independence, and in St. Bellarmine.

"All men are created equal," says the Declaration of Independence. "All men are born equally free and independent,"

says the Virginia Declaration. But Sydney had written: "The Schoolmen could not lay more approved foundations than that man is naturally free," and Filmer had paraphrased Bellarmine's "In a commonwealth all men are born naturally free and equal." (De Clericis, Ch. VII.)

"Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed," states the Declaration of Independence. "All power belongs to the people," says the Virginia Declaration. But, before them, Filmer had quoted Bellarmine as saying, "Political power is immediately in the whole multitude," and Bellarmine himself had written: "Political power is immediately as in its subject in the whole multitude."

May it not therefore be permissible to remind our fellow-citizens of the origin of the sacred principles of their government. Let them if they will credit them to their Puritan ancestors. We may well assert, however, that they cannot possibly find in their midst more enlightened defenders of these principles than among those who, like the editors of *America*, are the exponents of Catholic thought, because these principles, wherever found in Protestant writers, are but reformulations of Catholic doctrines. On that issue, Catholicism and Americanism must stand or fall together.

But, ladies and gentlemen, the question of the philosophical tenets at work in the world today may well be further pursued. Back of all political and social changes are changes of ideas. If today, we are facing such crises, national and international, it must be that something has gone wrong with our philosophies. Many non-Catholic thinkers are ready to agree with us to what has happened.

There are fundamentally only two possible schools of thought. One believes that there are two orders of existence, it is dualistic. The other believes that there is only one, it is monistic. The first believes in God as an entity distinct from the universe, in man as a personal entity distinct from God and unique in nature. The other believes either that there is no God and that man is but an evolution of material nature, or that God, man, and nature are merged in an emergent evolution. The first may be called humanistic. The second must be called naturalistic.

Now, our Occidental civilization was shaped by a dualistic philosophy. Greek thought had glimpsed it fitfully. Cath-

olic Christianity confirmed it resplendently, and, on its principles, molded the modern as opposed to the ancient world. Then came the cleavages in the Christian Church. Above all the turmoil to which they led, the final question really was: Could the realistic conception of the relation of man to God survive the disruption of Christendom? The answer is that this disruption radically compromised the precious notion of the nature of man. The eighteenth century witnessed the great regressions from the theism of Catholics and Protestants to Deism and even to materialism and to pantheism. The upshot in the nineteenth century, in spite of Kant's attempt to retain the idea of a personal God after having denied the power of the intellect to reach truth, was the completely revolutionary and tremendously influential philosophy of Hegel. With Hegel, the notion of God and of man as entities disappears, the very idea of being is lost. There remains only a becoming, the flux of everlasting change. Reality is held to be but a process, spirit, or idea which actualizes itself in history.

The reassertion of materialistic doctrines in the wake of Positivism, reinforced by the doctrine of evolution interpreted materialistically, could but strengthen this general trend to a monistic outlook. The pessimism of Schopenhauer, the ruthless will to power of Nietzsche, the pragmatism of James, the experimentalism of Dewey, and even Bergsonism, were to be but variations upon the central theme of the conception of all reality as a process of development, with a complete wiping out of all notions of an antecedently real realm of standards of the true and of the good in the light of what human behavior was to be judged.

What wonder, therefore, that in the course of the nineteenth century, civilization, as Christianity had reared it, began to collapse.

If there is no supernatural, then the whole Christian outlook is but a delusion; and the individual, stripped of the inalienable rights, which stemmed from his divine origin and destiny, must accept his total subservience to the State conceived as the latest expression of the emergent absolute. Why should we be surprised that the sixth century ended in the despair which so many writers have recorded and that the structure it raised crashed down in the catastrophe of a world war? Did not Hegel say that weaker nations have

absolutely no rights and that the victorious State is proved to be the highest stage of the development of the world spirit? In vain, too, on the morrow of that horror, did we struggle desperately to sign treaties and pacts in the hope of stabilizing our tottering world; for, if there is only an emergent becoming, what are treaties or contracts but the exigency of a momentary situation with no relevance when that situation changes? As for the rampage of ruthless individualism we witnessed, or the counter imperial will of Fascism, or the war against class and creed of Marxism, they too are but the logical products of monistic philosophies. In the battle line of a divided Christendom, Protestantism, it must be regretfully recorded, has been unable to hold its sector against the resurgence of naturalism. It has on too many points been routed by monistic modernism. Hence the inevitable threatened dislocation of the Occident, including the anger to our own State, for, if, as monistic modernism holds, there is no realm of eternal righteousness above us, then the American political system is an anachronism.

Well, what shall we do about it? Why, after we have recognized fully that this is a battle of ideas, we must take our stand. The modern world must be made to recognize that it has gone wrong on first principles. Our non-Catholic brethren must recover, wherever they have lost it, that dualistic philosophy of the abiding which uplifts instead of tearing down; that clearly proclaimed and firmly guaranteed supernatural outlook which gave the Western world its hope on the morrow of the dislocation of the Roman empire and which raised the masses of barbarians and of Roman slaves into peoples so confident of their rights and so trustful of the future that the medieval town halls and the marvels of the Gothic cathedrals came to be their fit expression. We must straighten out the distorted perspective of history and all unite anew, at least sufficiently to reclaim our humanistic and Christian tradition.

Is it possible that we can succeed in achieving this? At least this seems certain. Startling as it may seem, there is no people better placed today to take the leadership in this re-orientation of the world thought than the American people.

Why? Because, through that very peculiar turn of events which we have noted, they are not only the people whose government has been the most indubitably grounded

on humanistic and Christian principles, but the humanistic and Christian outlook is of their very fiber.

Thanks to their long practice of democracy, it is still second nature for them to think that the State is their servant and not their master; and that, above its possible tyrannical laws, stands the eternal righteousness of God's law. They instinctively reject the doctrine that the State may do with them and their children as it pleases because it can claim them body and soul. And so, before the resurgence of the doctrine of the Absolute State, which is the menace of the hour, it is certain that we can rely on the common sense of the American people.

However, this would not be sufficient. Though our people may be trusted, it would be too much to hope that they could indefinitely remain steadfast in their allegiance, if the intellectual and religious leadership of the country abandoned them. How far can we trust that leadership? It would be interesting to have a questionnaire sent today to all our professional intellectuals to find out whether they still believe in the philosophical and religious principles on which this nation was founded.

At this point, one further fact is beyond doubt. It is quite unnecessary to send such a questionnaire to the editors of *America* or to any communicant of the Catholic Church. But, fortunately, and here is our final basis of hope, it is equally certain that an ever larger number of our non-Catholic leaders of thought are beginning to realize that the monistic philosophy of becoming must be repudiated, and that the dualistic philosophical inheritance of the Catholic ages of faith in the abiding must be examined anew.

"I believe," writes one of my correspondents, an eminent Protestant leader who permitted me to quote him, "I believe that if we lose the distinction between the human and the sub-human in a pantheistic monism, then all is lost. The monism which blurs and finally banishes all the distinctions which give the moral and spiritual and æsthetic life of man any real meaning, I regard as the foe against which we must fight together. I find myself increasingly with the Neo-Thomists in respect to no end of matters. And I am sure that there are vast numbers of people in the Protestant churches who would agree with me in all these things."

In fact, as you know, there has already arisen a whole

school of American critical thought which fully recognizes all the fallacies of modernism. "We have gone wrong on first principles," wrote the leader of that school, the late Irving Babbitt. "we have allowed ourselves to be caught in the terrible naturalistic trap. . . . It is hard to avoid the conclusion that modern philosophy is bankrupt not merely from Kant but from Descartes." And the same Irving Babbitt, although he remained aloof from theological discussions, and hoped, though not too confidently, for the efficiency of a mere humanism, was not afraid to write as early as 1924: "Under certain conditions that are already partly in sight, the Catholic Church may perhaps be the only institution left in the Occident that can be counted on to uphold civilized standards."

Nor can we doubt that the import of philosophical and religious doctrines is understood even in the highest councils of the nation, when we may read such words as these: "The early Christians challenged the pagan ethics of Greece and of Rome; we are wholly ready to challenge the pagan ethics that are represented in many phases of our boasted modern civilization"; and since when we know that these words were solemnly spoken by the President of the United States.

May we not then say, ladies and gentlemen, that out of the darkness of the hour, there begins to dawn, even now, the promise of a new day, a day of spiritual resurrection. News that the light has already been victorious east of us, at least in some places, is daily becoming more abundant. In France, the naturalism of Taine and of Renan has long since been repudiated, and, within the last thirty or even forty years, a large number of the keenest minds of that passionately intellectual nation have found their way back to Rome.

Is it not also extremely striking how many men and women, in England and America, many of them converts, are even now reintegrating Catholic thought into English literature? In fact, as the Book Exhibit, held at the New York Centre this very week, brought home to us, we are now witnessing the undoubted development of an international renaissance of Catholic thought and action.

Why then should we be dismayed? The very collapse of the empires of the past need not alarm us. For the absolute State has had other forms than those threatening us to-

day. Neither should it be regretted that events are forcing us to get down again to fundamentals, especially as their re-examination must lead to the abandonment of many prejudices and misunderstandings inherited from eras of conflicts which have become obsolete.

Again, as Catholics, we appeal to the minds of our fellow-citizens only on the basis of objective truth. We all agree that in the trials through which we are passing, we must lift up our hearts. Catholicism has so prayed in the daily Mass for nineteen centuries. The substance of its philosophy is merely that the answer of all to that call of "*Sursum Corda*" must be the answer it has given for these same nineteen hundreds years: "*Habemus ad Dominum*. Our hearts are raised toward the Lord."

And so I believe, ladies and gentlemen, we may say that the spirit of this Silver Anniversary meeting dedicated to the demonstration of united Catholic thought and Action for God and country is one of quiet faith and hope, as it is one of Charity for all.

In that spirit the editors of *America* have labored for a quarter of a century. They have written to make Catholic thought shine forth in the true perspective of its history, as the most assured defender of the dignity of man and of human rights, as the very bulwark of a free State, and as the indispensable inheritance of our common humanity. All honor to them and to their whole order which, on so many fronts, is tirelessly carrying on for the greater glory of God and for the welfare of men.

And because the editors of *America* and their successors need not feel that they stand alone, because the ranks of their fellow-laborers—Catholic and non-Catholic, in the humanistic and genuinely Christian tradition, are growing in numbers in mutual understanding, I believe we may feel confident that this great nation, which for more than a hundred years, has been the hope of the oppressed peoples of the world, will continue to give the inspiring example of a country in which religious liberty and freedom of research are guaranteed, the sacredness of the individual and of the family is respected, minorities are protected, and the greater social control which our more complex civilization may require, will be achieved without any infringement upon the inalienable rights of the citizen.

The Old Deal and the New

RIGHT REV. MSGR. WILLIAM J. KERBY

An address by the Professor of Sociology, Catholic University of America, to the Regional Conference of the National Catholic Alumni Federation at Washington. Reprinted from the Catholic Bulletin (Minneapolis), June 9, 1934.

I HAVE been asked to suggest within the limits of fifteen minutes some kind of contrast between what may be laconically called the Old Deal and the New Deal. The phrase *Old Deal* may be taken to indicate the background of the present condition. It refers to the basic principles upon which the social system rested, the conditions that resulted under it, the disappointments that followed and the hitherto uncertain efforts at reform. The *New Deal* reminds us of the almost universal distress from which we have suffered, of the practical policies that have been adopted in our national emergency, and of the objectives that have prompted new efforts to save real democracy for the nation. It is, of course, out of the question to take up details. One can do little other than suggest elementary concepts.

* * *

The Old Deal out of which we are emerging did not aim directly at social justice. It did aim at the removal of historical obstacles to personal freedom and opportunity. Our democracy developed largely in this way. The Bills of Rights with which we are familiar were a glorious achievement. They were guarantees to the individual around which political constitutions were organized in relation to less complex historical conditions. To borrow a happy statement from an American thinker, Roscoe Pound, I believe, society endeavored to guarantee abstract liberty to abstract persons in abstract conditions. The inequalities among men, women and children that are due to nature, training, opportunity, and social conditions were disregarded. Action by the State was reduced to a minimum. Trust in the moral,

spiritual and social forces of life led men to expect that these forces would supplement the power of the State in the maintenance of the social order and the service of social justice. The belief prevailed, I think, that democracy was primarily social, moral, and spiritual and secondarily, political. It was thought that a maximum of social order would be achieved by a minimum of legal coercion through law, and by the free play of moral and social forces due to intelligent good will, personal idealism, and true social values. These forces were expected to have a major rôle in realizing the common aspirations of humanity.

A system of private property had been devised that guaranteed no property to anyone, that placed no limits on the property that one might accumulate. It promised to protect property legally acquired. It did not guarantee that anyone would acquire property although it did forbid undue methods in hindering one from acquisition or perhaps the opportunity for it.

* * *

The Old Deal included a system of competition which corroborated the deepest impulses of selfishness. Unequals competed for a living. Reasonable participation in the blessings of normal life was conditioned on income, and income was determined by capacity in the competitive struggle. The prizes of life went to the strong and the penalties of the social system were assembled on the bent shoulders of the weak. Moral, spiritual, and social forces were unequal to their colossal task. All forms of economic strength were like-minded and they were gradually consolidated. The social result of this consolidation created an economic order within the political and social order that defeated the larger aspirations of true democracy. The philosophy of strength was in large measure triumphant. They who had been the victors in the competitive struggle developed a working philosophy of selfishness and lived by its compelling direction. They adjusted in large measure their views of religion, of morality, of personal responsibility, of education and of the State in a way that paid ready homage to economic superiority and they were little impressed by the wider and more gentle philosophy that would interpret the brotherhood of man in the terms of concrete living.

The inevitable happened. All forms of strength were assembled in the lives of the relatively few whose natural ability, acquired power and social reenforcement encouraged them to aspire to the domination of the world. Neither public opinion nor deep concern for human life nor religious ideals nor moral interpretations succeeded in disciplining economic strength in relation to true human culture.

Industrial usurpation placed power in the hands of those whose authority wishes and interests were in conflict with the welfare of the industrial classes. Political usurpation enabled amalgamated capital to prevent the State from dealing promptly and effectively in the interest of the common welfare. The press that was theoretically free yielded to the influence of the powerful and we witnessed a journalistic usurpation that interfered with the development of a normal public opinion. The way was cleared for an economic domination that was surprisingly at variance with the aspirations of humanity for justice, reasonable security and happiness.

* * *

By force of circumstances that developed and of aspirations for true democracy and for the opportunity to live normally, the weaker classes gradually discovered their only form of strength, that of numbers. They attempted to up-build collective strength by the organization of labor and they found to their dismay that the individualistic State hampered them at every step in their search for justice. Their aspirations to live, to be happy, to enjoy normal home life, to take their dignified place in the composition of social life were baffled. The political constitution, the philosophy that shaped our laws and determined their execution in the maintenance of social order presented obstacle after obstacle that had to be overcome by painful and costly struggle. Whenever a grave social abuse clamored for remedy, economic strength with its inexhaustible resources made the enactment of relieving laws extremely difficult, when not impossible. When the weaker classes described the conditions under which they suffered, the stronger class denied the facts. When facts were established beyond dispute the stronger class challenged the interpretation of them.

When weakness, made strong, succeeded in reaching the halls of legislatures and bills were introduced, the combat was transferred to the halls of legislatures and the vicissitudes of debate were met. When public opinion was won to the cause of the weak, laws that promised comfort were enacted. They still had to face courts who had the power as well as the duty to declare that they were unconstitutional or constitutional. Sometimes the courts were reasonably suspected of a discouraging bias in their decisions. When it was found that constitutions actually prevented remedial measures that were called for, the necessity of amending a constitution appeared. And the same weary struggle was undertaken with increased disadvantages at this point.

The theoretical political emancipation that had gladdened many hearts in the past was accompanied by an economic servitude against which the weaker classes rebelled. Thus the consciousness of contradiction between political emancipation and economic dependence became the very heart of the labor question.

* * *

Notwithstanding these heartbreaking difficulties undeniable progress had been made. The moral, spiritual, and social forces of society were gradually enabled to make some of their expected contribution to a reasonable social order to which in fact the State had been unequal. The frequently unashamed influence of wealth and power was gradually diminished in the halls of legislatures. The welfare of the laboring class and of the poor had taken hold of the conscience of the world. Effective reforms followed and some touch of the vision of true democracy became much more effective as a working social force. The spurious sanctity of natural economic laws was diminished and the Christian democratic sanctities of human life gained respect slowly and were brought within the range of effective assertion throughout all social life.

There is no need to under-rate the tremendous contribution made by the Old Deal to what we may call human progress, for the moment. The Old Deal takes on an aspect of grandeur when we view it in an isolated way and recognize its tremendous one-sided achievements. But when we study

the enormous concentration of power on the one hand and the baffled lives and otherwise useless struggles of the weak from the standpoint of a complete philosophy of social life, and an ideal of true personal culture, the grandeur of economic achievement takes on a moral and social ugliness from which any gentle view of humanity recoils. One cannot refuse to consider the alarming dependence of the masses, their inadequacy to meet the ordinary demands of worthy living, indifference to distress, baffled hope, and defeated life, and perverted values that misdirected the genius of the world. And when one takes these things into account, a normal man inspired by a normal social vision could not but be touched to tears.

* * *

One pathetic feature of this economic process should be mentioned. There were many among the strong who were high-minded, who honestly wished for better things, who would gladly share their advantages with those who had been less successful, but they had little choice. The tyranny of the economic system respected neither their nobility nor their worthy aspirations. It went its way with unrelenting step. We have been told many times that in a competing group the morals tend toward the lowest level in the group. The methods of unfair competition that became so significant were merely aspects of a ferocious struggle that had little in common with the ideals of human brotherhood.

The powerful man who incorporates into his working philosophy of life all of the assumptions, attitudes, standards, methods, and valuations that are actually incorporated in the Old Deal shows us in one detail the inevitable outcome of the social order under which we have suffered so grievously. What does the New Deal say to such a man?

It tells him that life is more sacred than property and that the dignity of man is a social axiom that must be respected in the structure of any social system. Both democracy and Christianity hold that property is a stewardship for humanity rather than for greater accumulation. It tells him that the welfare of the weak is a first lien on the surplus strength of the powerful. It tells him that dividends in the form of health, leisure, security, happy home life, and cultural education are more honorable to him and more noble

in themselves than are dividends in the terms of money. It tells him that the savagery of competition has no rights that one must respect, and that only a chastened competition that respects the sanctities of life can contribute to the upbuilding of true civilization. Unfair and immoral forms of competition degrade the beneficiary of it no less than the victim.

* * *

The New Deal tells such a representative of the Old Deal that the functions of the State must expand under the imperial orders of truth, morality, and justice, until the facts of historical democracy are corrected and life enters upon the pathway toward democracy in fact. To quote again the thinker whom I mentioned a moment ago, the New Deal aspires to insure concrete liberty for concrete men, women and children in concrete conditions. It tells us that this established social system that has disappointed us so deeply must be wrenched out of its settled adjustment and reconstructed into one that will take wise care of the weaker classes who must have protection. The New Deal tells us that we have less occasion to fear codes, even planned production, State paternalism, and a diminishing return on capital than we have to fear economic slavery, broken health, constant worry, disrupted homes, massive poverty and insecurity for millions of lives that know no peace.

I am not unmindful of the staggering task that the New Deal has undertaken. Much of its difficulty is due to our inability to cope with colossal complicated social problems that concern social justice and social order. Normally a social system must grow gradually. Social changes are gravely disturbing. One cannot easily foresee the problems of readjustment involved in any social change. The New Deal has labored under the terrific disadvantage of having to work in a hurry. It acquired the courage to do so because of the incredible collapse from which we have suffered and the insistent cries of the distressed as they looked to a new leadership for relief.

But I think our greatest problem lies in the stubborn personal philosophy of the beneficiaries of the Old Deal, a philosophy that must be regarded as an archaic survival when brought face to face with the facts of life, and when the ideals of life are looked upon with adequate reverence.

It was inevitable and it is perhaps providential that the New Deal is creating new problems and meeting temporary setbacks in winning public opinion. There is in this situation a promise of practical wisdom and effective statesmanship that perhaps it had otherwise not achieved. Whatever the objectives of the New Deal and whatever its difficulties, there is so much to commend it in the name of humanity that it deserves the confidence and the patience upon which its success depends. The New Deal is asking the strength of the world to be more thoughtful of the weakness of the world. For in the Christian dispensation strength is sanctified by serving weakness, and the growth of civilization depends upon the impersonal generousities of surplus strength as we grope toward the high goal of social life. Little as we may like it we must ask the State to do more in a positive way for social justice than we have asked it to do in the past. And we must call the moral, spiritual and social forces to their appointed task in conjunction with the State as we undertake the duties that the evident plans of God impose upon us.

We must seek to humanize competition, to outlaw by prompt action all unfair methods of competition and thus to preserve its contribution to our common welfare with enlightened determination. We must aim to inject fundamental moral principles into economic processes and to return to a cultural concept of the deep relations of all social interests around a scale of true values that has the high sanction of God.

Action—Political or Catholic?

PETER MAURIN

Reprinted from the Daily Catholic Worker (New York), Vol. I, No. 2.

1. Shortly after the War the Bishops of America formulated a Program of Social Reconstruction largely based on Co-operation.
2. But the Bishops' Program failed to materialize for lack of co-operators.
3. Catholic laymen and women were more interested in a laissez-faire economy.
4. So Catholic laymen and women went back to normalcy with Harding; they tried to keep cool with Coolidge and now they try to see rosy with Roosevelt.
5. Catholic laymen and women are more interested in political action than they are interested in Catholic Action.
6. Catholic laymen and women are more ready to follow the leadership of the politicians than they are ready to follow the leadership of the Bishops.

A MODERN PLAGUE

1. Glenn Frank, President of Wisconsin University, says:
"What ails modern society is the separation of the spiritual from the material."
2. Pope Pius XI calls this separation
"a modern plague"
or to speak more plainly "a pest."
3. This separation of the spiritual from the material
is what we call "Secularism."
4. Everything has been secularized
everything has been divorced from religion.
5. We have divorced religion from education,
we have divorced religion from politics,
we have divorced religion from business.

SECULARISM

1. When religion has nothing to do with education,
education is only information,
plenty of facts
and no understanding.
2. When religion has nothing to do with politics,
politics is only factionalism.
"Let's turn the rascals out
so our good friends can get in."
3. When religion has nothing to do with business,
business is only commercialism.
4. And when religion has nothing to do
with either education, politics and business,
you have the religion of business
taking the place of the business of religion.